

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension or)	
)	ORDER OF
Revocation of the Educator Certificate)	
)	SUSPENSION
of Lynn Bainbridge Williams)	
)	
Certificate 117461)	

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this certificate suspension or revocation matter on August 10, 2005. On June 21, 2004, the State Department of Education (Department) sent a notice letter of the possible suspension or revocation of South Carolina educator certificate 117461 to Lynn Bainbridge Williams by certified mail, return receipt requested. Ms. Williams received the notice letter as evidenced by a signed postal receipt. Ms. Williams subsequently requested a hearing, which was held on June 1, 2005, by Geraldine Urbanic, Esquire, a hearing officer appointed by the State Board.

On August 10, 2005, Ms. Urbanic presented a report to the State Board of her findings and conclusions, and recommended that a two-year certificate suspension be imposed from July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2007, including successful completion of counseling or treatment as found to be appropriate by psychological determination. After receiving the report, the State Board voted to accept the recommendation that Ms. Williams' certificate be suspended for a two year period, but added that reinstatement is to be contingent upon successful completion of a physical examination and treatment, if warranted, by a licensed health care provider, as well as the recommended psychological assessment and counseling, also by a licensed healthcare provider.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Williams had been an exemplary teacher for twenty years in the Anderson County School District Five schools. While there was no reported criticism of her teaching ability, there were concerns expressed about her out of classroom behavior. Ms. Williams was placed on administrative leave for several days during the 2002-03 school year and was reassigned to a Behavior Improvement Room. There were concerns about the community perception that Ms. Williams's home was a source of drugs and alcohol for people in their early twenties. Additionally, Ms. Williams admitted to poor judgment in drinking alcohol before attending a Sunday afternoon school function. Ms. Williams also admitted letting a person who did not possess a valid driver's license operate her vehicle on the night of July 4, 2003. Ms. Williams denied being intoxicated herself on the night of July 4, 2003, but admitted that a nineteen year old was in the vehicle who was intoxicated, and that she could not remember the communications of that evening with the nineteen year old's mother concerning her son's whereabouts. The School District Administration had reason to question Ms. Williams ability to exercise sound judgment.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The South Carolina Board of Education may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004), S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (1991). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct. After considering the findings of the hearing officer, the State Board concludes that there is substantial evidence to establish just cause to suspend the educator certificate of Lynn B. Williams for two years, from July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2007. If she chooses to reapply for reinstatement, Ms. Williams must pass a character and fitness review by the

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State Board, to include evidence of successful completion of the required psychological and physical examinations and treatment.

South Carolina State Board of Education

/S/ Paul M. Forrester
Paul M. Forrester, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina
August 10, 2005